

CLAYTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, January 22, 2007

The Center of Clayton – OASIS Meeting Room A

The following members were present:

Brad Bernstein	Judy Goodman
Mimi Deem	Dick Hyde
Deb Dubin	Omri Praiss
Lori Elliott	Rich Yawitz

Excused/Absent

Alex Berger
Andy Goldberg
Jill Indovino

Also Present:

Patty DeForrest, Director of Parks and Recreation
Eric Gruenenfelder, Superintendent of Recreation
Kyle Henke, Aquatic Supervisor
Ann Jacobs, Program Supervisor

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from the December 4 meeting were approved as read.

Director's Report

This is a very busy time of the year at The Center of Clayton. Everyone is geared up for the New Year and basketball is also in session. Copies of the Summer Camp brochure were distributed to the Commission. All Parks and Recreation positions are currently filled.

A year ago in March we began online registration as an option for program registration. We have seen some business and currently about seven percent of our registrations are completed online. We were expecting this percentage to be much higher at this point. The decision we made when we began online registration was to charge the registration fee to the registrant. Since then we have come to the determination that people are not choosing to register online due to the cost of these fees. If the City were we would have to include these fees in the cost of program fees, raising them an average of two percent. Currently if you register at the Center or over the phone no additional fees are incurred. If we increase the amount of online registration we will free up our welcome desk attendants and in turn improve customer service at the Center. If participants are registering for a \$20 class the fee is small; however if someone registers for a \$200 class the fees are significantly higher. It will be helpful if at the top of every page of the brochure we list register online at www.centerofclayton.com or add register twenty-four hours a day. There is no savings to register online. Another good idea may be to offer an incentive for people to register online to get them interested and show them how simple and convenient it is. Staff will continue to explore these options and return with a recommendation during the budget process.

The next event is Cupid's Ball on Monday, February 12 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. We usually have at over five hundred people attended the event. On March 23 and 24 we will be hosting the environmental recycling event in Shaw Park. Last year eleven trailers full of electronic equipment were taken away from the event. Our new Community Program Supervisor is working on classes on tree education, gardening and other outdoor oriented programs. This will be tied into additional environmental education events. Tree trimming and maintenance of trees will be included in this curriculum.

Tree maintenance is done in the winter. The Parks department does contract some of this out. Public Works does all the tree maintenance on the street. The contractors come in and do tree trimming at Oak Knoll and Shaw Park and every year we spend about \$30,000 to maintain and cut down some of the trees. This year additional money was included for tree planting, which will allow us to replace trees as the large trees get older.

We received notification that we were awarded a grant to fund the construction portion of the Youth Activity Center. We are within about \$8,000 of all funding and will hopefully receive approval for the final portion on Friday, January 26th from the CRSWC. Our goal is to open by May 1st. The Youth Activity Center will have a sports wall, cardio equipment with play stations on them, fitness equipment and there will be a large amount of open space for play, games and classes. There will be a wide variety of usage. All video games will be removed in order to make room for all new equipment.

The City of Clayton is participating in Shape Up Missouri for the third year in a row. This year we have over 4 teams who entered the competition. Shape Up Missouri is an online team based program where participants commit to improving their lifestyle by participating in the activity and weight loss components of the program.

Shape Up Missouri is run by the Show-Me State Games. This is the first year we promoted to the program to members, guest and others in the community.

The Parks and Recreation Joint Study Subcommittee is getting very close to presenting their final report to the Board of Alderman. Each subcommittee will be making recommendations to the merger study committee. The recommendations will be presented to the general joint study committee and then the final report will be made public to both cities.

Shaw Park Aquatic Center Operations / Concessions

Ms. DeForrest announced that Mr. Henke received the American Red Cross Lifesaver Award for a rescue he did at the Center of Clayton on the pool deck. The Red Cross gives these awards out once a year. Mr. Henke's staff has a great safety record. Mr. Henke noted that he felt as if anyone on his staff could have saved this swimmer's life because of the great training they receive.

Mr. Henke gave an end of the season Aquatic report to the Commission. (Please see the attached report for detailed information.)

Ms. Dubin stated that she would like to make sure more shade is added to the list of improvements that will be considered for the 2007 Shaw Park Aquatic Center summer season. It was noted that additional shade was added next to the bleachers near the end of the 2006 summer season. The Clayton Parks Foundation covered the costs of some of these additions. Patty will continue to explore other areas for additional shade treatment. On average, about 1,000 people a day use Shaw Park Pool. In order, to improve the cleanliness of the locker rooms at the Shaw Park Aquatic Center the sealer will be removed from the floors this winter. The extension of the season was a success and will probably become a regular traditional. This is certainly weather dependent, but seems to be a popular option for the first week of September. Mr. Yawitz noted it would be a good idea to advertise the parking garage across from the Aquatic Center because it is free after 6:00 p.m. during the week and it is free on the weekends.

This year we are going out to bid for an outside vendor to run concessions.. Ms. Jacobs conducted this report and thanked Ms. Dubin for her time and personal experiences about the pool and concessions operations. If we do not get any response from outside groups we have identified, we will work on resolving some of the issues we experienced this season. We have four to five part-time managers who assist with operations. Issues included being out of food, friendliness of staff, amount of time to cook food and communication between managers and staff. Solutions to these issues would be to order more stock because we have ample space to store food. We will put one person in charge of inventory and reduce the number of choices on the menu. We would take chicken fingers and pizzas off of the menu for sure because they take so long to prepare. In order to improve cleanliness a checklist will be created to ensure these duties are getting done on a regular basis. Managers go through safe food handling training sessions. Training sessions of this type will continue throughout the season. . We have a list of approximately twenty-four businesses that we are sending the bid information to. Some of the pros of this are someone else would be responsible for the operation, choices of food would be better, we would not have to hire and train staff, and could potentially reduce our budget responsibilities and losses in concession operations. The cons are someone else is responsible for the operations and we would not have as much control over that. If the weather is bad they might decide not to open at all and right now we have staff on call so they are able to report to work if the weather improves. The cost of items could possible increase. Ms. DeForrest stated that it may be somewhat difficult to get a vendor who would operate a facility for three months. However, there may be some restaurants that are slow during the summer months who potentially may be interested. We will know by March because those submitting bids have three weeks to respond. Contracting someone to do this job does have very good value. Mr. Henke reported that from conducting his research about what other facilities similar to ours do with their concessions stands and found that many of them operate their concession operations in house.

Hanley House Council Update

We are continuing to move forward with a goal of having a recommendation before June from the Hanley House Council. We are trying to fit this in within our budget schedule. The Council is considering three options for moving forward at this time. Two of the options involved doing a historic structures report, which has not been done on the house. The report runs somewhere between \$20,000 to \$25,000 and it will give us more information for renovation or reinterpretation. We do have the money budgeted. What the Hanley House Council would very much like to know more about is the site itself. So the archeological study will help us with that. We did a preliminary one, but we need to do more extensive research to identify if there were other buildings on the site

and if so where were they. One of the preliminary things they said was that where the fence is was where the original drive would have been. Ms. Goodman emphasized that with each of the options we are mindful of grant opportunities and we would certainly want to be able to apply for whatever monies may be available from historic foundations or parks foundations. The Council would really like to look at preserving the house in some way shape or form. Therefore we are trying to find out what type of investment would be helpful. The funding for this project was budgeted in 2007.

It is a recreation and storm water expenditure, which means it, has a fund balance. In order to make an educated decision about whether or not we are going to move forward with this project means that we need to know if it will be a couple hundred thousand or half a million dollars. Without this report we do not know answers to these questions. We have not created any value to one of the oldest home in Clayton because of the renovations, which need to take place. At this point it is really hard to evaluate what it means to the community. The site has open green space so we need to keep in mind that this space is very valuable especially because there is such a limited amount of park space around here.

Ice Rink Update

The Task Force is continuing to move ahead with this project. Three meetings have been held at this point. The task force meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday night at 6:00 p.m. before the BOA meeting at City Hall. Currently we are working with an engineering firm, Jacobs, Inc. to do an evaluation of our ice making system and the safety components of it. They will make recommendations as to what we need to do. What we are looking for is for them to tell us how we change the system and perhaps do that piece and open next year while we evaluate what else we might do at the rink. The task force is looking at other ideas such as covering the rink and upgrading the ice making system itself to extend the season. The discussions have been lengthy and beneficial. We have a page on our website that is called the ice rink task force. You can go to this link and look at any of the documents we have prepared. Some of it is data on usage and other rinks here in St. Louis. A timeline and a vision statement have also been developed. The hope with the Ice Rink Task Force is to have some sort of early recommendation by early April. They will come to the Commission before going to the BOA. After they make preliminary recommendations Ms. DeForrest's hope would be that some of those folks would continue on in subcategories and lend their expertise to operations and promotions.

Old Business/New Business

Mayor Uchitelle will be at the next commission meeting. He will talk to the Commission about dog parks and the dog park community in St. Louis.

Respectfully Submitted By,
Denise Ucinski